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ICC AWARDS \$4.7 MILLION IN DIGITAL DIVIDE GRANTS

The Illinois Commerce Commission approved awarding \$4.7 million in grants from the Digital Divide Elimination Infrastructure Fund to ten projects designed to provide high speed internet access to underserved areas of the state.

Grants were awarded to the following:

- Clearwave Communications LLC, or Delta Communications
- Egyptian Internet Services, Inc.
- Heartland Communications Internet Services, Inc.
- Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative
- Mt. Vernon.Net
- Northern Illinois Technology Triangle
- City of Sullivan
- City of Rock Falls
- USA Broadband-El, LLC
- ROC-Net Holdings, LLC

The Commission issued a Request for Proposals last year, and received 17 applications for grants from the fund. Those requests were reviewed and testimony filed in Docket 06-0187. Among the criteria used to evaluate the proposals was whether residents and small businesses in an area had access to advanced telecommunications services, if there is a low population density and if the area has not yet developed a competitive market for advanced telecommunications services.

The Digital Divide Elimination Infrastructure Fund was established by the General Assembly to ensure that all areas of the state have access to high-speed data transmission facilities.

Approximately \$5 million remaining in the fund will be awarded for new projects that address these same issues next year.

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